

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING APRIL 4, 2012
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of April 4, 2012 was called to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Belmont City Hall Council Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair (CC) Cheechov, Commissioner (C) Block, Wright, Eric Sullivan, Bortoli, Wong, Kevin Sullivan and Youth Commissioners (YC) Bartee

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: Youth Commissioner Zakeri

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, and Secretary (S) Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Wright noted her statement on page 3 should be revised to state *the City should pursue the grant but see if there is enough interest in potential partners before making a final commitment.*

C Bortoli moved, seconded by C Kevin Sullivan, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 1, 2012 with this revision. Vote 5 in favor, 0 opposed. C Wong, Block and Eric Sullivan abstained.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

C Bortoli reported on the Senior Advisory Committee meeting. Lunch program is going well. St. Patrick's Day lunch had over 60 people; birthday lunches have 40-50 people in attendance. The Senior Center continues to offer new programs and trips.

C Kevin Sullivan reported on the Open Space trails. Parks Department staff met with him and a Park Maintenance worker has been assigned to assist the volunteers with identifying trail maintenance needs and working on an invasive species plan. They had an REI Work Day and have another one scheduled in May.

C Wright thanked former Commissioner Davis, who was in the audience, for his service on the Commission and welcomed the new Commissioners.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None.

V. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

a. Parks & Recreation Department Budget

PRD Gervais reported on the Parks & Recreation Department Budget. He emphasized it is important that the community have an understanding of the budget because if it is not budgeted it will not get done. He noted staff is currently working on the FY13 budget which starts on July 1 and ends on June 30.

PRD Gervais reviewed the Parks and Recreation Divisions and the number of staff in each division. The Parks Division maintains all of the city's parks, facilities and open space. The Recreation Division has more staff but this includes a lot of part-time employees.

The Parks Division maintains all of the City facilities which includes 155,000 square feet of public buildings. The Fire Department facilities were recently added. There is one person dedicated to this maintenance with some assistance from the Parks crew. The Parks Division maintains 14 developed parks, open space areas, and athletic fields.

The Recreation Division oversees recreation programs which include a variety of recreation classes including popular youth dance and theater programs. The Teen Program is now a partnership and the Teen Room has been relocated to the library. Senior Services are also provided by the Recreation Division. Scheduling for the athletic fields for the youth sports organizations are provided as well. The Belmont Community Learning Center is a part of the Recreation Division. Facility reservations including the rental of buildings and picnic areas are a part of the services offered.

PRD Gervais explained most of the funding for the Department comes from the General Fund. The Recreation Division generates revenue through recreation programs, day care, senior services, and facility rentals. Overall there has been an increase in participation and revenue from these programs in recent years.

PRD Gervais noted there are funding sources that are not in the operating budget that can only be used in specific functions. This includes the Planned Park Account which can only be used for purchasing land or developing parks. This account is used for Capital Improvement Projects. The Library has a separate maintenance account. The Athletic Field User fees are collected from players that use the fields and these fees are used only for athletic field maintenance. There is also a separate Tree Fund which is directed toward tree projects.

PRD Gervais reviewed the short, mid and long term goals of the Department:

Short term

Cipriani Dog Park Improvement Project
1870 Art Center Transition
Open Space Area Improvements
School Construction – reduce impact on athletic fields

Mid term

Davey Glen Park
Belmont Sports Complex Turf Project
Manor House Lease
Facility Management

Long term

Barrett Community Center
Parks & Open Space Master Plan

PRD Gervais responded to Commission questions.

- The City plans to maintain its Tree City USA status and there will be a Proclamation on the City Council's April 24, 2012 agenda to celebrate Arbor Day on April 27, 2012.
- Facility Rental Rate evaluation will be done. Staff will look into having a business student with NDNU gather the information.
- The Manor House lease expired in 2008 and staff will get direction from the City Council on the City's position.
- The Budget will start going to the City Council in April and information will be available with the posted agendas.
- Revenue collected goes into the General Fund. Not all costs are covered in the Recreation Division as some programs such as senior services are not meant to generate revenue. Belmont based groups use facilities for little or no costs as this is part of the service provided to the community.
- There is \$550,000 in the Planned Park Fund. These funds will be used for the Cipriani Dog Park Project, Sports Complex Turf Project planning, and for Davey Glen Park. The City did not receive the grant money for the Davey Glen Park project.
- Plans for the Tree Fund would be considered by the Tree Board when it is established. There is a Capital Improvement Project for a planting some street trees in neighborhoods that do not have a lot of trees.

- The Department does not have a specific revenue goal. Revenue has increased substantially in the past five years. In the City's budget there is a goal for the Recreation Division costs not to exceed \$560,000 from the General Fund and it may be achieved this year.
- The expenses for the Parks Division is 3.5 million year with approximately one million for building maintenance and 2.5 million for the parks but can fluctuate depending on building repairs needed. There has been some discussion on creating a capital improvement program that is more inclusive on maintenance and focus on the higher priorities.
- Solar leases and other sustainable issues would be covered by a couple of Departments including Parks & Recreation.
- Staff has completed inspections of some city buildings with the Building Official to gather data on their condition and needed repairs.
- Davey Glen Park will be brought back to the Commission as an agenda item.
- The footpath around the dog park recommended by the Commission was included in the project plans which will be brought to the City Council for approval.

b. Proposed Survey

PRD Gervais stated the Department has completed two surveys in the past and results were included in the Commission's packet. A small group that met to discuss Barrett Community Center suggested doing another survey to find out what features people would like to see at a recreation facility.

PRD Gervais noted in the past staff used the data base of customers that sign up for recreation classes for surveys. This time staff would like to include a wider range of people to survey using Belmont Patch and Facebook to get a larger audience. He requested the Commission review and comment on the questions included in the proposed survey and suggest methods for outreach.

In response to C Cheechov's question, PRD Gervais replied that there will be a change on the online fees in the fall going from a graduated percentage fee to a flat fee. It was noted it may not be necessary to ask that question again in the next survey.

Questions raised by the Commission included:

- Would the City Clerk's office have lists available for sending out surveys to residents?
- Can the wording in question #11 changed from workout to participate?
- Could additional items be included in Question #15 – labyrinth, bocce court, tech development center, video production center

- Should other methods to survey people that are not already engaged in programs be considered – paper surveys or request Neighborhood Associations to assist in getting the word out?
- What would cost be to dedicate resources to get a comprehensive electronic connection to residents? What population would that leave out?
- What would be the expected response if surveys were mailed to all Belmont residences?
- Could postcards be mailed to residents requesting they take a survey on-line and offering the option to request a paper survey?
- Would it be possible to offer a discount on a class if they complete a survey?
- Is question #17 on Adult Sports for organized teams?
- Would the public understand what a public/private partnership means?

Mike Davis stated he has met with some people who have shown an interest in the future of the Barrett Community Center. The purpose of their meetings has been to prepare for a General Town meeting on the future development of Barrett. The suggested process for this group is to prepare a plan to the Commission to review and refer to City Council. The survey would be beneficial and help with the framework of the meeting. He noted he sent an email to the Commission with his personal recommendations. He said those interested in these meetings could reach him at Barrettfuture@aol.com.

In response to a Commission question, Mr. Davis explained at the first meeting the group reviewed the city's existing parks and recreation facilities. At their second meeting they discussed other community centers throughout the nation. There were seven participants at the meetings that had specifically come to the Commission to discuss Barrett. Those in attendance included residents from the immediate neighborhood, Carlmont and Hallmark neighborhoods.

Mr. Davis noted the previous surveys showed strong support for a swimming pool and most of those specifically wanted a fitness pool.

C Block stated overall the survey looks useful. He suggested adding a question of when people would be available to participate in programs. He also proposed adding a question on who in the home would be likely to participate in the programs.

C Wright agreed a question on the time available would be helpful. She suggested that the questions expand asking first what they participated in and then what their experience was with it. She noted for question #9 it would be better to separate out each item listed.

C Wright noted there was an article in Patch about the signboard with a survey if people thought it should be electronic. She suggested adding a question about the signboard in the survey and how often they look at it.

C Wright noted question #14 on a tax increase was already asked in a more specific manner in a previous survey but noted the answer may change from year to year. She requested that question #15 include tennis courts and a better playground to the list. She also suggested alphabetizing the list of items. C Wright recommended using a different phrase than public/private partnership that would be easier for people to understand.

C Wright proposed having a question on facility rental space; first asking if one has rented space, including a yes or no that expands to reasons to select for why not.

C Eric Sullivan agreed some questions were already asked on a tax increase. He suggested questions on how citizens would be willing to participate and noted there was some interest in a bond measure in a past survey. He proposed exploring the pay for use option and if people would pay for a membership.

CC Cheechov noted that an electronic signboard was offered to the city years ago and had been discussed and people preferred the current reader board.

C Bortoli suggested for the section on Barrett that the order of the questions be changed so that the funding is asked at the end. He agreed there should be some options other than a tax increase; one of which could be a sales tax increase. Question #18 should be expanded to explain it and add a comment section to it.

C Wong agreed some of the questions need to be targeted and there should be follow-up questions. He suggested that the questions be organized into sections. For question #15 he would like to see some non-traditional classes like tech learning and follow up with video classes to encourage participants to comeback.

C Kevin Sullivan proposed including in the Barrett area to ask questions of the grand vision for the Center.

C Wright noted the address of Barrett Community Center should be included on the survey. She added that she would prefer not to spend a lot of money on a survey but to try outreach using neighborhood associations or using the back page of the Activity Guide to mention it.

C Kevin Sullivan said he would like a postcard insert with instructions on how to get to the website and noting the survey is also available on paper.

C Block stated he was curious about youths in the community and their ideas. YC Bartee noted that YC Zakeri is working on a survey for youths. PRD Gervais stated he suggested that those questions be included in this survey.

The Commission decided to form an Ad-Hoc Committee to further review the survey and ways to get it out to the community. Commissioners Block, Kevin Sullivan, Eric Sullivan and Wong were appointed to serve on the Ad-Hoc Committee.

c. Commission Reorganization

CC Cheechov opened up nominations for the Chair position.

C Wright nominated C Kevin Sullivan for Chair. YC Bartee seconded.

CC Cheechov nominated C Bortoli

Ballot slips were completed by the Commission. Vote: 6 for C Kevin Sullivan, 2 for C Bortoli
Chair: Kevin Sullivan

C Kevin Sullivan nominated C Wright for Vice Chair. There were no other nominations.
Vice Chair: Susan Wright

C Kevin Sullivan explained the Tree Ordinance was revised and part of the revision included reestablishing the Tree Board. The Tree Board is to consist of two Park & Recreation Commissioners and two Planning Commissioners and one member-at-large appointed by the City Council. This Board will meet once a quarter with the meetings alternating before Park & Recreation Commission and Planning Commission meetings.

PRD Gervais explained the Tree Board would enforce the Tree Ordinance. If a resident were denied a Tree Removal Permit due to the Ordinance and they wanted to challenge this they would bring it to the Tree Board. He added this has not happened in the past but is a possibility. The Tree Board would also develop policies related to trees. Another function would be discussing tree planting projects and tree management. They are also supposed to develop a list of desired tree species and less-desired tree species.

CC Kevin Sullivan volunteered to serve on the Tree Board. No other Commissioners expressed interest. CC Kevin Sullivan suggested appointing YC Zakeri, who was absent, and if she is unable to serve bring this back to the next meeting. There was Commission consensus.

CC Kevin Sullivan explained that Commissioners are appointed to liaison assignments and the roles are different for each assignment. To give the newly appointed Commissioners a better understanding he requested an explanation for each item and what the role would require. He also suggested having a primary appointment and a backup for each assignment.

Description of roles:

- City Council – review agendas and report for Commission as needed
- School District – long term partnership with a 10-year joint use agreement on fields. School construction may impact field conditions.
- Planning Commission – check agendas and attend meetings when items may affect parks.
- Senior Advisory – Committee consists of members that represent neighborhood associations, members-at-large, Senior Club, business community and City Council and P&R Commission. They meet every other month to discuss issues at the Senior Center.
- Park Boosters – Groups that organizes the Concerts in the Park and their proceeds are donated to the City for park improvements.
- Cottage Auxiliary – Volunteers that support Cottage in Twin Pines Park. They prepare special luncheons and participate in the Holiday Craft Faire to raise funds to preserve the Cottage.
- Community Players – Vaudeville style troops that put on performances in the fall at Barrett Community Center.
- Bicycle Advisory Committee – Board that meets at various times and also meets with the Safety Committee.

- Youth Sports & Sports Advisory (Commission decided to combined into one Committee assignment) - Currently working on planning for the synthetic turf project at the Sports Complex. They meet monthly.
- Open Space – Advocate for the continuous support and maintenance in the open space areas.
- Paper Trails – Unofficial trail system that consists of pathways that go through neighborhoods with a goal of connecting and improving some pathways.
- Green Advisory Committee – Various members were appointed by City Council. They put together a set of recommendations related to sustainability. They have not met for several months but will likely meet again concerning the Climate Action Plan.

General Plan was added as a Committee assignment. Community Players was removed from the list.

Committee Assignments were appointed as follows:

	<u>Primary</u>	<u>Backup</u>
City Council	Eric Sullivan	Wong
School District	Bortoli	Bartee
Planning Commission	Block	Kevin Sullivan
Senior Advisory	Bortoli	Zakeri
Park Boosters	Cheechov	Wright
Cottage Auxiliary	Cheechov	Bartee
Bicycle Advisory	Block	Kevin Sullivan
Open Space	Kevin Sullivan	Wright
Paper Trails	Wright	Block
Sports Advisory Committee	Bortoli	Kevin Sullivan
Green Advisory Committee	Wright	Wong
General Plan	Wong	

Park Assignments: Appointees check parks periodically and report maintenance needs to staff

Water Dog Lake & Hidden Valley	Block & Kevin Sullivan
Fox Field & Hallmark	Bortoli
Library & Park	Wright
O'Donnell & Alexander	Wong
Twin Pines	Cheechov
Ralston Field	Bortoli & Bartee
Sports Complex & Bike Bridge	Bortoli & Bartee
McDougal	Kevin Sullivan
Davey Glen Park	Wright, Bartee & Zakeri
College View & Wharton	Bartee
Central Field	Bartee
Barrett Community Center	Eric Sullivan, Wright & Wong
Cipriani Park/Dog Park	Cheechov
Nesbit Field	Wong & Zakeri

Semeria
Wakefield
Hastings Tot Lot

Eric Sullivan & Block
Kevin Sullivan & Block
Kevin Sullivan & Zakeri

CC Sullivan thanked C Cheechov for her service as Chair the past year.

C Wright suggested that next year the staff report include a description on each Committee assignment. CC Sullivan added he would like a map included too.

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais reported the following:

- The Parks & Recreation Department has a Facebook Page now.
- The Rotary Club is assisting the Department with improvements to the Buckeye Picnic Area on April 28, 2012. Staff is checking into getting the barbeque fixed.
- The Park Boosters are funding improvements to the awnings in the Meadow and the concrete pillars will be painted.
- The Cipriani Dog Park will be on the City Council agenda of April 10, 2012.
- The 1870 Art Center is going through a transition stage. The middle wing will change from 26 artists to 12 and the wing closest to Ralston Avenue will be converted into community use.
- The City did not receive the grant for Davey Glen Park.
- The City applied for a community development block grant to go towards painting the Senior & Community Center. New carpet and furniture will also be included in this project.
- A picnic rental site will be added to Alexander Park.
- Streets Alive Event will be held on Sunday, May 6. There will be activities held at the Farmer's Market.
- The Summer Activity Guide has been mailed out to the community.
- A map showing all of the parks was distributed to the Commission.

C Bortoli stated he introduced himself to the Project Supervisor at Ralston School where eight new classrooms will be added. C Bortoli expressed concern if the fields will be repaired following construction. He also met the Project Supervisor at Fox School and they are putting in sprinklers along the fence to keep the field watered and keep the grass alive. Plan is to finish the contract by the end of the summer.

B. Future Agenda Items

Davey Glen Park Status Report
Meeting Procedures
City Website

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VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:49 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director